

WINTHROP AMES RETURNS AS A PRODUCER



Henry E. Dixey "Mr. Lazarus" Shubert.



Betty Callish "The Great Lover" C. and H.



Irene Ferwick "The Guilty Man" Astor



Marjorie Patterson "Pierrot the Prodigal" Booth



Violet Heming and Richard Gordon "The Flame" Lyric

IN WIGS AND WINGS

Has an Actor in a Farce the Right to Wink at the Audience?

By HEYWOOD BROWN.

JUST as soon as we say that we "hold" something or other along comes an attack and we are obliged to shorten our lines or retire to previously prepared positions. This time it is about farce acting, and the attacker is A. E. Thomas.

On some points we grant his success, but we are not willing to admit that a general retirement is necessary. In speaking of Jimmy Powers in "Somebody's Luggage" we wrote, "We hold that the secret of farce success is that the most harassed person in the play shall be on winking terms with his audience." However, we are shocked to observe inconsistency in our reviews. Marjorie Rembeau was praised because she played a farce part with a "delicate touch of disbelief," while Cordoba was commended because "he has an ardor in his acting that serves just as well in farce as in more serious drama."

However, we will let Mr. Thomas do the swatting. He writes:

"I see the Morning Try-bune that you think the secret of farce success is that the most harassed person in the play should seem to be having a good time. You alarm me deeply, because in a play that may or may not be seen on B'way this winter I proceeded upon the contrary principle. Indeed, I have always believed it fatal that a farce character should allow an audience to know that he thinks he is funny. I can think of no end of successful farces in which this point is illustrated. For example, all the farces in which William Gillette was the harassed person—'The Private Secretary,' 'Too Much Johnson,' 'Mrs. Wilkinson's Widow.' Nothing could exceed the seriousness with which he played these farces. Never a suspicion of a wink at his audience. Certainly, to be more modern, neither hero nor heroine nor comic opera tenor appeared to be having any fun in 'Twin Beds,' and the funny pair in 'Fair and Warmer' are scared to death most of the time. Nobody could accuse that heavy English type, Lawrence D'Orray, of winking at his audience in 'The Earl of Pawtucket.' He was the most solemn ass in the world, yet he was enormously funny and the farce most successful."

"Perhaps, I misunderstand your attitude, but unless I do I can't see how it can possibly be defended. In fact, I should go so far as to say that for any harassed person in a farce to be on winking terms with his audience would be ruinous to the success of the play. There are only a few persons so gifted that they can be amused at their own humor and amuse us with it too. Whenever an actor comes out and says to me, 'See how funny I am. Aren't I having an uproarious evening?' I say to him, 'You lie, you cheap skate. You're funny as a glass eye, and where is the nearest saloon?'"

"Of course these are only my notions, and yet they're not. Come to think of it (which I am only just now doing) all the so-called authorities back me up. I can't quote 'em now, but if there is a canon on the stage it is that farce must be seriously played."

If we had a concrete base prepared for Clayton Hamilton we believe we could find some ammunition for our cause in "The Theory of the Theatre," as it is most stark back to

A Bit of a Breathing Spell

"THE FLAME" to-morrow evening at the Lyric. A postponed production of Richard Walton Tully's newest play, with a cast including John Cope, William Courtleigh and Violet Heming.

"MR. LAZARUS" Tuesday evening at the Shubert. This is a comedy of Harvey O'Higgins and Harriet Ford, authors of "The Argyle Case," "The Dummy" and "Polygamy." Henry E. Dixey, after an absence of several years from the New York stage, will star in the title role.

In Chicago, where "Mr. Lazarus" spent the spring, it was considered a bit of a mystery. It is a problem in identity, and at the end of the fourth act the question is left to the audience to solve. In this respect the play follows the technique of Frank Stockton's story, "The Lady or the Tiger?"

At all events, "Mr. Lazarus" tells the story of an Australian miner, who comes back after twenty years to the home of one John Malloy, thought to have been killed in a railroad accident. Mrs. Malloy has collected the insurance and become Mrs. Sylvester and is running a lodging house when Mr. Lazarus arrives. Is Mr. Lazarus John Malloy or is he not? Inquires the play.

In Mr. Dixey's support will be Florine Arnold, of "The Things That Count" and "The Melody of Youth"; Eva Le Gallienne, gifted daughter of the poet; William T. Clark, Ton. Powers and Marie Ascaraga. It is a cast of only six.

"PIERROT THE PRODIGAL" Wednesday evening at the Booth. With "Pierrot the Prodigal" Winthrop Ames returns to the firing line after an absence embracing an entire season. The production is not solely Mr. Ames's, being presented in conjunction with Walter Knight, an English manager, and by the same company of French artists who played the piece in London under Mr. Knight's direction.

"Pierrot the Prodigal" is a pantomime. Furthermore, it is an old pantomime, one of the oldest and best known of all pantomimes. Under the title of "L'Enfant Prodiges," for example, it was presented here by Augustin Daly a quarter of a century ago. Mr. Ames calls the piece a mimodrama and announces that the story is simple and natural, the pantomime action graceful and intelligible and the music delicious and charming.

farce says, for instance, "Now, if you will grant me the somewhat improbable major premise that a husband starts out on his honeymoon by mistake with his wife's sister instead of his wife, I will show you a series of happenings which are logical enough and which bear real life all hollow."

The author of the farce never forgets for a moment that he is not dealing with life, but something much more rapid and spirited. It is only fair that the actors and the audience should be in on the secret, too.

And so we hold, even if it is only by the tips of our fingers, "that not infrequently farce success is gained by the fact that the most harassed person in the play is on winking terms with his audience." At any rate we are sure that more farces are spoiled by being played too seriously than are marred by under playing.

A READER, A. S., believes that "The Happy Ending" failed because of the poor notices which it received. She enjoyed the performance exceedingly and cannot understand why it was described in such harsh terms.

"The avalanche of destructive criticism has killed it," she writes. "It may also have killed the courage of Mr. Hopkins, and that is where the pity of this ruthless exercise of power comes in on the part of the critics. Against this my letter is a protest. As one who takes thoughtfully your reviews of the plays, and who recognizes an underlying kindness in your work generally, I would like to make the plea that you guide your brother critics to a remembrance that building and not demolishing is the function of criticism (construction, not destruction)."

We do not think "The Happy End-

AROUND AND ABOUT

By GEORGE S. KAUFMAN.

JACK HAZZARD, 50 per cent author of "Turn to the Right," is one of Broadway's most occupied persons nowadays. First, he feels it incumbent upon himself to spend considerable time in the neighborhood of the Gaiety box office, endeavoring to guess the gross. Second, he is helping to mount "Go To It," the next musical show at the Princess, of which he is also co-author—if not co, at least co-co. And—third—he is rehearsing a role in "Little Miss Springtime," successor to the "Follies" at the Amsterdam. As Hazzard himself puts it, he is so busy that he has fallen fearfully behind in his drinking, and has practically abandoned all hope of catching up.

Pearl-derbied, debonair and many pounds heavier, Raymond Hitchcock is back upon Broadway. For the past some months he has been in London, and prior to that the films knew him. So New York has seen nothing of him since the days of "The Beauty Shop."

The new Hitchcock show, "Betty," is in rehearsal at the Globe—sharing the stage with performances of "Fast and Grow Fat" and rehearsals of "Chin-Chin." The name of the piece, incidentally, will positively be "Betty"—not "The Plain Lord Playne," as facetiously announced by Mr. Hitchcock. Presently it will take to the road, and the length of its tour will be dependent upon the run of the Frank McIntyre piece at the Globe.

As to Hitchcock's increased weight, he did not acquire it in London, despite his prosperity there. When last seen hereabouts he weighed 150 pounds—perhaps less. Then he went into moving pictures.

"One day in Los Angeles I stepped on a scale," he said, "and it registered 208. A second later it dropped to 178, for I lost thirty pounds from fright right there. Now I'm around 180. Do I look fat?"

Well—er—not exactly fat. That is, Mr. Hitchcock, you wouldn't look fat if you were Frank McIntyre.

Along with Hitchcock came an English youth named Arthur Lowry, who played in the London production of "Betty." On his first night in an American hotel—this is a guaranteed story—he placed his shoes outside the door. In the morning he discovered that they had been thrown away.

You are at liberty to doubt it, but Frank Craven was a bad boy at the old Congress Street grounds in Boston "way back in the Brotherhood days—ball players, not engineers. That has nothing to do with "Seven Chances," of course, except to establish (in round or elliptical numbers) Mr. Craven's age. On second thoughts, however, the Brotherhood days were not so long ago, at that. A friend is a friend.

There was a time when Mr. Craven thought he wanted to act forever in his own shows, but to-day he isn't so sure about it. You remember "Too Many Cooks," of course? Well, Craven wrote it, and then played it for two years. During the second year his hair began to fall out and his rheumatism to fall in, and he decided to quit. The trouble was that he was worrying. He was constantly imagining that the laughs were not coming as they should, and then he began to conjure up the things that he thought the audience was thinking. Then he fell into the habit of saying everybody's lines to himself, as the other people were saying them, and worrying about their parts, too. Then he decided to quit.

Craven is a modest actor. There is a note in "Seven Chances" where he be-

wails the fact that six or seven girls have refused him, despite the fact that he will have twelve million dollars. And then he adds: "Gee, I can't be as ugly as that." . . . Well, he put that line in of his own accord.

Sign of dramatic progress: Joe Leblang's cut rate ticket parlors are being enlarged.

To the public he is Henry E. Dixey, but nary an actor calls him anything but Harry Dixey.

On second or third or fourth thought the name of Cyril Maude's new play—the Stephen Leacock one—will not be "The Barber of Mariposa." Mr. Maude leans toward brevity in titles—witness "Grumpy"—and has about decided on "Jeff" as the name of the Leacock-Morton play. The principal character, in case you haven't read "Sunshine Sketches," is Jefferson Thorpe.

"High Jinks" is about to be produced in London, but Otto Hauerbach and Rudolph Friml will have to be content with the royalties, letting the glory fall where it may. Mr. Alfred Butt's three-sheets fall to mention the authors, the reason for the omission being concerned with their too Teutonic names.

The Astor Theatre having passed out of the hands of Cohan & Harris, there has been considerable speculation recently as to the home of George Cohan's future revues. The C. & H. being intended for the more serious of the partners' offerings, it seems a bit likely that this year's revue will be housed in the New Amsterdam. It opens Christmas night, and now is the time to get your tickets.

Several managements posted notices on their call boards late in the week warning the casts not to do any week-ending lest a railroad strike should make it impossible for them to get back to town. This suggests a new use for a railroad strike.

Jay Barnes, back from Chicago and points West, brings along the newest rhyme from the Coast. In a Pacific musical comedy they are singing:

They can mangle us and strangle us, But still we'll love Los Angeles.

The C and H to Open.

To-morrow evening New York will have a new theatre—no, not exactly new. It will be merely the Candler, but renamed the C and H, in honor of its bosses. The play will be "The Great Lover," Leo Ditrichstein's operatic comedy, seen last season at the Longacre. The engagement is for four weeks only, and at the end of that time the play will go on tour. The company, with a couple of exceptions, is the same which originally supported Mr. Ditrichstein in the play, and even the newcomers were seen with him for a time last season. The cast will include Betty Callish, Essex Dane, Anne McNaughton, Camille Dalberg, Florence Page, Nina Gray, Elaine Hall, Alma Wolfe, Cora Witherspoon, Arthur Lewis, Lee Miller, Arthur Klein, Malcolm Fassett, John Bedouin, William Ricciardi, Frederick Macklyn, George Romain, Alfred Keppeler, Antonio Salerno, Alexis H. Poljanov, Julian Little and others.

Daly's Makes Another Start.

Daly's Theatre, after several years of hand-to-mouth existence, has joined the newly organized International Circuit and will open its season to-morrow afternoon. The first attraction will be "The Hour of Temptation," a melodrama by Lee Morrison, who dramatized "Three Weeks,"

Where Plays Continue

DRAMA.

PLAYHOUSE. "The Man Who Came Back"
ASTOR. "The Guilty Man"
FULTON. "The Silent Witness"

COMEDY.

C. AND H. "The Great Lover"
COMEDY. Washington Square Players
GAIETY. "Turn to the Right"
BELASCO. "The Boomerang"

FARCE.

GLOBE. "Fast and Grow Fat"
LONGACRE. "A Pair of Queens"
FORTY-EIGHTH STREET. "Somebody's Luggage"
REPUBLIC. "His Bridal Night"
LYCEUM. "Please Help Emily"
ELTINGE. "Cheating Cheaters"
GEORGE M. COHAN'S. "Seven Chances"
HARRIS. "Fair and Warmer"

MUSICAL.

HIPPODROME. "The Big Show"
FORTY-FOURTH STREET. "The Girl from Brazil"
NEW AMSTERDAM. "Ziegfeld Follies"
WINTER GARDEN. "The Passing Show of 1916"
CASINO. "Very Good Eddie"
EMPIRE. "Sybil"
NEW AMSTERDAM ROOF. "Ziegfeld Midnight Frolic"

HOW MANY PEOPLE MAKE A PLAY?

THE simple little comedy that requires only five or six characters for its development is deceiving you—be beware! If it runs true to form it has given employment to several thousand persons since it left the hands of the playwright, even though you see only John and Mary and the maid when you witness the play in the theatre. The play in question is "The Silent Witness," which is made the play in question because its author, Otto Hauerbach, went to a lot of trouble to recall the thousand or more persons who have been connected with it. Otherwise any other play would do.

So far as the audience is concerned only sixteen characters make "The Silent Witness." Skipping the author, although one really shouldn't, the play really provided work for the typist who copied it, the messenger who carried it to the manager's office, the playbroker who handled it for the author, the clerks employed by the playbroker, the playwright employed by the producing manager, the stage director, the stage manager who assisted him, the scenic artist, the scenic artist's staff of painters, handlayers and clerks; the contractor who builds the framework, his staff of men and clerks; the truckmen who transported it from the builder to the painter and then to the theatre; the lithographers and printers and their artists who design and manufacture the posters; the express companies, their clerks and handlers who transported the printed matter from factory to towns en route; the bill-posters who smear it on the billboards and the clerks employed in those offices; the advertising solicitors (hundreds), representing

publications of all kinds; novelty manufacturers of all kinds, who call upon managers of successful and other plays; the stage hands, musicians, actors, ushers, ticket sellers and takers; theatre business manager, press agent, advertising agent, cleaners, electricians, auditors and other attaches of the theatre; the ticket speculators, the ticket agencies, employing hundreds of clerks in their offices and hundreds in the hotel ticket offices; the cut-rate ticket offices; the photographer who made flashlights of scenes and his staff of operators, clerks and artists; the man who made frames for the photographs; the electric light companies, the building inspectors, health inspectors, firemen on duty at each performance, tax collectors, license bureau clerks; the engravers who make half-tone cuts for use in programmes and advertising matter; the programme publisher and his staff of clerks, messengers, editors, solicitors et al.; the costumer, modiste, wigmaker, shoemaker, milliner, etc., who furnish the wardrobe; the sign-painter and then the reviewer, who starts a lot of people working in the editorial and composing rooms.

Of course, the thing needn't stop there. One can go ahead and include the subway, which enabled the actors to get to the theatre, and then take in all the people who helped to build the subway. Now, if one only had the space.

Extra Matinees To-morrow.

The overworked actor will help about Labor Day by playing a special matinee to-morrow. Practically all of the New York houses have announced additional performances.